

VZCZCXYZ0002
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLM #0126 0321032
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 011032Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7644
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1816

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000126

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/RD/SCA, DS/DSS/ITA, CA AND SA/INS
NEW DELHI FOR LEGAL ATTACHE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: EMBASSY COLOMBO EAC MEETING 02/01/2008

REF: COLOMBO 0114

¶1. (SBU) Summary: AmEmbassy Colombo convened an Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meeting on February 1, 2008. The EAC discussed Post,s security posture in light of possible attacks by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in retaliation for a bombing in LTTE controlled Mannar District and in the context of the upcoming Sri Lanka Independence Day holiday. The EAC concluded that security arrangements in place were commensurate with the threat and that adjustments to procedural or personal security measures were not required at this time. The EAC agreed that Post,s security advice to the general American public was also appropriate to the threat. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On February 1, 2008, AmEmbassy Colombo convened an EAC meeting. Present were the Ambassador, DCM, RSO, DAO, PAO, RAO, POL, ECON, MGT, CONS, ODC and USAID. The agenda items for the meeting were:

--Possible LTTE attacks in Colombo in retaliation for the January 29 bombing of a bus, the passengers of which included children, near the Madhu Church area in Mannar District, Northern Province

--The general security situation relative to the Sri Lankan Independence Day holiday (February 4)

¶3. (SBU) The claymore mine bombing of a bus on January 29 in LTTE controlled Mannar District killed 18 people, including twelve children (reftel). The LTTE has blamed the attack on GSL security forces, while the GSL has publicly denied involvement. LTTE's modus operandi has been to strike back after such incidents and its past retaliatory attacks have targeted GSL facilities and personnel, as well as civilians, in Colombo and elsewhere in the South. The EAC agreed that the LTTE will probably retaliate, but noted that there existed no information regarding the exact timing or nature of attack. The RSO noted the LTTE was unlikely to target Americans or American interests and that the threat to Americans continues to be the chance of being a collateral victim if caught in the proximity of an attack. The EAC concurred with the RSO and concluded that Post,s procedural security measures and advice for personal security were commensurate with the threat.

¶4. (SBU) Turning to security for the February 4 Independence Day holiday, the RSO repeated his assessment that Americans or American interests were unlikely to be the targets of attacks during the holiday. The RSO added that according to Sri Lanka Police Service (SLPS) sources, the LTTE had never successfully attacked during an Independence Day celebration. Nevertheless, SLPS sources believed that the likelihood of an attempted LTTE attack during the holiday was high, so GSL

security forces throughout the country, and especially in Colombo, were on high alert. Security precautions for the formal ceremony scheduled for the morning of February 4 will be stringent. GSL security will conduct bomb sweeps and thereafter guard the venue (Galle Face Green) on a round-the-clock basis. The navy will patrol the sea adjacent to the site. Police sharpshooters with high-powered weapons will stand guard on rooftops of buildings close to the event. Security forces will strictly control access to the event. Police and military will close and cordon adjacent roads. Only invited guests may attend. The guests include ambassadors and high commissioners of foreign missions resident in Sri Lanka. The RSO determined that available information precluded recommending against attendance. The EAC concurred with the RSO's conclusion.

¶5. (SBU) The EAC reviewed Post's current Travel Warning and Warden Message. Both of these documents warn Americans to avoid the likely targets of LTTE attacks (including GSL facilities, military convoys and VIP motorcades) and to defer non-essential visits to crowded public places and high-profile venues. As this advice is appropriate for the current security situation, the EAC decided that revising the information was not essential at this time.

¶6. (U) Post will continue to monitor the security situation and report further developments, if any, septel. POC for this message is RSO Michael V. Perkins, who may be contacted at 94.11.249.8885, 94.11.249.8888 (MSG Post 1 after regular business hours), or via the classified and unclassified email systems.
BLAKE